

## **INTERVIEW WITH WARREN BISHOP**

### **PART TWO: Graduate School at University of Washington, Impact of Canwell Hearings on Campus Life, Work with the Bureau of Governmental Research and Services, Edmonds City Council**

**Ms. Kilgannon:** This decision to go to graduate school, was it something that kind of grew on you over time? You realized you were interested or that you wanted more than to be a high school teacher? How did you come to do that?

**Mr. Bishop:** Of course, I became aware of the importance of a higher education and I didn't especially enjoy teaching in the public school system. I just wanted to go and get a higher education, and I wanted to go to the University of Washington. That was one of my...I don't know why, maybe because my aunt lived there and I spent a lot of time visiting with her.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Were you familiar with it already, then? The campus or the program or just kind of hoping for the best?

**Mr. Bishop:** Not really. We moved into wartime housing. I don't know what they called it.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Those Quonset things?

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes. In Kirkland. And we took a bus that was provided—a whole bunch of us were living there—transportation to the University of Washington campus. So there were a lot of veterans who had returned to the University of Washington and gone to school there.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** It must have been quite a community.

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes. There were twenty-some political science students who returned to the University of Washington on the G.I. Bill after the war to complete their graduate work in political science. Some of them wanted to pursue a greater interest in public administration and were actually working on their graduate degree in public administration. And probably ten or so of those individuals were actually zeroing in on that approach. So it was really a busy place and it was enjoyable. We had good professors. I was intent on going as far as I could, as you can see.

Another thing: Barbara and I decided to move out of rental housing. We moved to Edmonds because she taught at Shoreline. The closest area we could be was in Edmonds, so we rented an apartment in Edmonds. At that stage, I was still trying to get a teaching job and I remember spending a lot of nights in a phone booth when it was pouring outdoors to follow up on applications. I was so disappointed. There wasn't anything happening and finally—can you imagine this—Great Falls, Montana became interested in me and so I was on their list, but I just didn't hear anything. And I just was so concerned. At that time I wasn't even at the University of

Washington as an intern. So one night I went down to this phone booth—we couldn't afford to have a phone—and called the superintendent on the phone to see what was going on. He said, "Well, we've been looking at your background and we noticed that you still would possibly qualify as a reserve officer until 1953, and we do not want to get into a situation where you would come to join us and then have to leave because you'd have to report back to the reserves." And I said, "I'm not even aware of that being the case."

**Ms. Kilgannon:** How likely would that be?

**Mr. Bishop:** In their minds, it could have taken me away from the system, you know. So that fell apart. But within a month or less, I was on the list at the University of Washington.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** At that point did you become one of these interns?

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** So it all worked out?

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** I'm glad you didn't go to Montana.

**Mr. Bishop:** I think even Barbara was. She grew up in Montana—Lewistown, Montana, which is not very far from Great Falls, but I don't think she was any more excited about it.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** She had made her break.

**Mr. Bishop:** And then of course, later on, when Barbara and I built a house in Edmonds, within a week the ground buckled in behind the house. And I said, "This is not going to work!" So I got to work on a sewer system and formed an LID and did that. Then we got a sewer system and then I decided, "Why don't I just run for the city council?" So I ran for the city council and was elected and we did all kinds of things, which was good because we adopted a subdivision ordinance and zoning ordinances so that Edmonds would have a chance to grow properly.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Was that well received in Edmonds? Were you a popular council person?

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes. I think so. I really enjoyed it.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Did you give speeches? You must have had to campaign.

**Mr. Bishop:** Right. And go out with the people after the council meetings and get acquainted.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Did you enjoy that part, being on the other side of the fence?

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes. So I think that was a good thing for me to do that.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** How many years were you on the council?

**Mr. Bishop:** I was still on the council when I was appointed by Governor-elect Rosellini.

Then things sort of started happening. First of all, I was hired as an intern in the Bureau of Governmental Research and Services while I was still pursuing course work on what I thought was going to be a doctorate, but I never got that far. That was interesting because I did a lot of work in municipal research.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** I'd like to learn more about the Bureau of Governmental Research, what it was, and more about university life. What it was like to come there just after the war with the huge influx of students coming in from their interrupted educations? What it was like back then—the intellectual atmosphere? Who were the thinkers? What were the philosophies of the day?

**Mr. Bishop:** The then-existing Bureau of Government Research and Services, which is a function of political science, was the research arm of the Department of Political Science, which was headed by Professor Don Webster. At least four or five of those students, including myself, were selected for internships with the Bureau. And, as it turned out, the University of Washington also housed the Association of Washington Cities, which became, later, something that obviously was a conflict of interest with the University, so the Association of Washington Cities moved off of the campus and had offices elsewhere.

While we were there, a lot of the Bureau of Governmental Research activity was related to city research and actually served as an organization to serve cities and to answer their questions regarding problems and so on. The Bureau also had an annual Institute of Government on the campus, which many interested individuals and officials of state and local government would attend. It was normally held in the summer. So these same individuals who were brought along as graduate students worked very much in that Institute of Governmental Research. I was one of those who was selected to be one of those interns.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Would that be a great marriage of theory and practice?

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** That's exciting.

**Mr. Bishop:** It was indeed a very enriching experience because we held offices in the building and we were consulting with persons who were on the staff. We went to meetings with governmental agencies to participate in discussions. We did research reports on various issues, so it was a wonderful education in connection with the graduate degree that we were working on. In fact, I became so involved in that that subsequently I was actually appointed to the faculty in the same organization and my consulting became more significant and I was sort of the director of the Institute of Government for a while. It was just a very enriching experience, and probably had a lot to do with the experience that I needed, which became, later, of interest to the Governor-elect Rosellini, when it came time to seek out a person from the University of Washington who could serve as his

chief of staff. That's where I met Harold Shefelman and he subsequently became a very strong supporter of me. So it was a good opportunity.

After the Association of Washington Cities disconnected themselves from the University of Washington, the Bureau became even stronger in their official capacity of providing research to cities and counties and the special districts throughout the state. Later, the Bureau became an organization called the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington. My interest in the activity there became so embedded in this organization that from 1977, which was quite a while after I finished my eight years as Chief of Staff and was then at the Washington State University, I became the president of the board of this organization and was there as president of the board from 1977 to 1992.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** That's a long time.

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes. That was really a great experience. So I concentrated most of my attention in local government and I participated in activities consisting of helping—going out and conducting education courses for persons who were going to become city councilpersons. I also worked with organizations in unincorporated areas to prepare themselves to vote on the issue of incorporation. I participated in the Bellevue incorporation study; there were quite a few city-manager cities that were changing their form of government. So I conducted courses for those organizations to learn more about the management of a city under the city-management form of government.

I continued to do those things, but the board was responsible for the individuals who were hired to actually do that. But when I was still at the University of Washington in 1951, I became a member of the faculty, and participated as a consultant on these kinds of issues. So it was a great experience for me.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Was there much overlay? You were concentrating on cities and counties, but did you inadvertently or along the way learn about state government?

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Are they very different from each other?

**Mr. Bishop:** The state government was so much involved because those local governments operated with enabling legislation by statute, so the Legislature was very much involved in the nature of government of those local organizations. So I had a lot of activity with state government.

I also became a member of the Edmonds city council, not to become a person who would be familiar necessarily with being a council, but it was just an organization that I wanted to work with. So state government became very much involved in my career.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Did you have a point of view on how counties and cities got their powers from the state government? Did you think that was a good system or should maybe powers have gone the other way?

**Mr. Bishop:** I thought, essentially, that there needed to be a greater understanding and relationship between state and city governments. Since all of the authority that these local organizations originated from state legislation, it seemed to me that there was a need for there to be a closer relationship with the state. And there were a lot of state agencies that were actually involved in relationships with cities and counties, especially; they were sort of intertwined.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** It seems like just in those years, the early 1950s, cities were changing their charters. Weren't they going from having commissions to city councils with mayors, stronger mayors? They were changing their structure.

**Mr. Bishop:** The city manager type of government had just begun to emerge but there were still quite a few cities that were commission forms of government, which meant that they operated with a three-member commission who were full-time and paid. And it wasn't actually a concentration of a management approach to cities except through these three compartments. There were many cities that wanted to change that. All the others were mayor/council types.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Was that just too cumbersome? It didn't work very well? Would your Bureau have been part of helping people look at it differently?

**Mr. Bishop:** It wasn't a way to centralize the operations of cities because there was one commissioner of public works, a commissioner of public finance, and this type of thing. So these were all separated out in the cities and it wasn't really a good efficient structure. There were still some commission cities.

It was obviously—even the strong mayor/council cities were not sufficiently organized to have a strong administrator, a strong management person, because mayors, most of them, came from normal business activities in that city. There are still strong mayor/council cities but the mayor's position has become full time and there are many expert people appointed by the mayor, like in Seattle or Tacoma. Of course, Tacoma has a city manager.

So the cities started to adopt charters—large cities, first class cities—which would set forth clearly the management functions of the various administrative offices. The City of Seattle's charter, for example, is a strong-mayor type charter which establishes departments and so on. So it's almost like a management type. Tacoma, earlier on, decided they wanted to change from their commission form of government and go directly to a council/manager form of government. Port Angeles...there are quite a few cities that made this change. But

the business of municipal management was becoming more paramount and more time and more education was being spent for persons hired into that system. So we actually responded to letters from cities throughout the state regarding various problems in city government, or various legal problems. It was actually a research arm of the Association of Washington Cities.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** What would be a kind of common problem that you would help them with? Could you give me an example?

**Mr. Bishop:** Most of them would be sort of semi-legal, about were they allowed to do certain things; LIDs; or able to do certain things in personnel; how could they combine the utilities so that they could finance improvements; issuing bonds. Just a whole range of municipal management. And of course, we learned with them, to a large degree. It was a wonderful education.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** It seems like there was a lot of ferment just then. Wasn't the population of Washington really growing in those years, so that towns would be kind of straining their systems to contain all these people?

**Mr. Bishop:** Cities were growing so fast—the forms of government were growing so fast; improvements were being made because of the expansion of population, and so on.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Counties seemed to be changing their structure as well, and then you had the rise of the Metro idea in the Seattle area, where unrelated bodies start to relate to each other in a new way. It seems like an exciting period in city council and local government issues.

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes. There was a lot of transition that transpired in the fifties.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Was that brought on by more population, a more complex society?

**Mr. Bishop:** Growing populations, and the desire and need to be able to consolidate all these functions into an operating system. There are even now metropolitan park districts which enabled cities and counties to work together to manage parks. Yakima has a metropolitan park district and there are several others. But it's clear that when a metropolitan area is growing rapidly, instead of having separate incorporated little cities, to be able to combine all those activities into one metropolitan form of government so that there's only one police department, one fire department and so on—and that, of course, reflects Seattle's metropolitan form of government.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Was that part of the intellectual growth of the times? When you were involved in this field, were there big names who were thinking up these new ideas in these forms of government? Were there professors or different writers who were coming up with these new approaches who would have been an influence?

**Mr. Bishop:** People who had either legal training or public administration training became more influential in the growth of these communities. Jim Ellis is an excellent example in Seattle. In fact, he is often identified as being the person who influenced the growth of metropolitan government in Seattle. He was an attorney who provided services to municipal forms of government and firms like that—Shefelman’s firm, and Thorgrimson, and Ellis’ firm. But those individuals came from legal firms who could see that the advantages of developing mechanisms, structures, which would help the growth of those areas. Clearly, there were many, many annexations that were taking place and new incorporations of smaller cities.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** And the growth of suburbs. That’s a big phenomenon right after the war in this state: housing booms. During the Depression and the war years, things were kind of in a holding pattern and then as soon as the war was over and resources start to be freed up for other activities, you get this big boom in people coming back to the state and needing houses and creating all these new kinds of communities. And they realized that the structure they had had in the 1920s was not working so well any more?

**Mr. Bishop:** No, it didn’t. That was financing, because financing was becoming a major problem for cities and counties, and laws were being developed and passed without too much guidance. So we would get involved in that. I personally spent a lot of time visiting cities and working with council people and with the management people. Whenever a city would adopt...I would, first of all, go out and attempt to help them decide which form of government they should have. As you can imagine, I was pretty much sponsoring the idea of a city management form of government. But then after that would happen, and a new council would be elected, I would go and visit the council and conduct a course on city government.

It also created a market for persons who were trained as public administrators. And I think that’s why there were so many persons at the same time as I was going to school who were taking public administration and preparing themselves to move into those cities for management positions of the large departments and of the cities, and so on.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Was it a fairly new field, public administration as a discipline?

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes. It certainly was, because it was happening when I first started graduate school. I commenced doing my graduate work in international affairs. There were several professors, George Shipman among them, who spoke to me and said, “Really, you should change your concentration to public administration,” because the number of professional positions in international relations was not exactly a big market. I think that’s why I shifted. I changed everything. That’s why I spent so many months and years in the graduate school and still I didn’t even get a masters degree because I was headed for a PhD. While I was doing that I became so involved, I was too busy to finish up!



**Ms. Kilgannon:** It doesn't seem to have hurt your career any. And you were doing all when you were still a student yourself?

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes. I admired the career of city management. In fact, I envisioned myself possibly going in that direction. But instead, I got involved in a faculty kind of situation. There was a wonderful group of interns, graduate students, and the Bureau which was on the campus, which was part of the University of Washington. They hired graduate students to staff their operation. I was fortunate enough to be hired after a year, I guess. But then, things developed that happened to be something I liked. I had a certain ability for that kind of thing, especially workshops, and so on. So they decided—the University of Washington put me on a permanent appointment with the faculty—not a professor, but a permanent research position.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Did your teaching career help you figure out how to give workshops and how to teach people, because, basically, that's what you were doing, I suppose?

**Mr. Bishop:** I think so. It was just because of the experience of doing it and working with professors and others, and having taken so many hours that I had a lot of experience in that type of thing. They had an annual Institute of Government at the University of Washington and I became the coordinator of that Institute of Government. That was for citizens who'd come from these various cities to this Institute interested in government.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** There were all these fresh ideas, this growth, this development. As we often find in history, when you've got a whole new push going forward for new ideas you have a reaction, too. With Metro, which for urban planners must have been an exciting initiative, you had an awful lot of people saying, "This is socialism, this is communism. We can't have super-government. It's dangerous." There was that sort of shadow side of what was going on. And you were saying that during your years at the University also saw some ferment on the other side of the coin. The progression of ideas, but also the reaction. You were at the University during the Canwell hearings that challenged the whole idea of academic freedom and what we normally think of as a university atmosphere. Could you tell us a little bit about that experience?

**Mr. Bishop:** This all occurred about the same time while I was at the University of Washington. There had been hearings going on in the federal government about un-American activities and that sort of spread out and among the states. And so here in Washington, a legislator, Al Canwell, became very instrumental in agitating this issue and bringing about a committee on un-American affairs in the Legislature, which he chaired. The hearings were held, especially at the institutions of higher education, where they thought that there were certain professors teaching new ideas and new approaches which were just beyond what could possibly be understood



by the general population. The Canwell hearings were a very serious set of incidents in this state. It brought about a vigorous interaction between groups and between individuals who felt differently about those kinds of issues. As a result, he became a very negative person in the educational system and especially in higher education.

There were several professors at the University of Washington, who were called to the Canwell hearings. That caused such a stir on the campus that the president became involved to determine whether there was indeed some un-American activity that was occurring with those particular professors. And all the faculty became involved in conducting their own intelligence on the issue. As a result of this, several of the faculty members were dismissed by the then-president from their faculty positions because this particular movement within the state was such a pressure on the president that he had to take some action.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** As a student, when did you first hear about this? What were your reactions?

**Mr. Bishop:** That's while I was a graduate student at the University of Washington when this was going on.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Did this fly around the campus?

**Mr. Bishop:** Students, especially those of us in the graduate school, became greatly concerned by that activity and felt sympathetic towards the professors who were doing an excellent job of teaching. And just because they had attended a couple of meetings of various organizations which the Canwell committee had already stamped as being communist...

**Ms. Kilgannon:** And including some that other people did not even recognize as being communist-front organizations.

**Mr. Bishop:** So, it was a very upsetting situation for us.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Did that have a chilling effect on students and professors? Did you feel that if you had certain opinions or promoted certain ideas that you ran a danger of being stamped by this same label?

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes, I think that the professors became very sensitive about their conduct in the classes and the questions that were being asked about particularly political interests. I know that the professors at the University of Washington in the Political Science Department were very concerned about what they were fearful would be some of their teachings would be branded as a communistic approach.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Certainly urban planning was at one time considered socialistic.

**Mr. Bishop:** Right.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** So your entire discipline could be considered somewhat suspect, I suppose.

**Mr. Bishop:** The study of international affairs, other countries where communism was in effect, had its greatest

impact there. And those were the professors who were identified as being communist. Some of them were scientists, and so it was extremely difficult. It was an unsettling time.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** While it was happening, I imagine, that was making headlines. Did it take a while to heal and for the university to rework itself a little bit and get over this incident? Did this go on and continue to have a sort of sour taste in everyone's mouth, or were you able to come together after some point?

**Mr. Bishop:** It became such a cause to a group of policy makers in the state that Higher Education was threatened, especially the University of Washington, because they were on the leading edge of teaching. And after these professors were released, the faculty who were all organized, were very upset and actually criticized the University's administration for allowing themselves to be affected in order to bring about actions that would be so unrealistic. Releasing these professors was the worst thing that could happen. Of course, they were under a tremendous pressure from certain members of the Legislature to do something about it. And at the University of Washington years later the then-President Gerberding actually made a request for the administration to be forgiven for the way in which they had handled that situation, and made it very public. And that was necessary to calm the faculty and students and others. I think, at that stage, things were really beginning to turn around and confidence was being re-introduced into the system of higher education.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Did these events have an actual impact on how you did your own work?

**Mr. Bishop:** I think that most of us who were in the graduate school joined with the members of the faculty in being very critical about what was going on, because obviously it was interfering with the direction of education, which in order to become great we were interested in not interfering and letting people interfere who were actually doing the injustice to the system.

At the University of Washington there were several faculty members, Phillips in philosophy, Butterworth in English, Ralph Gundlach in psychology, Melville Jacobs, Harold Eby and Professor Melvin Radar. Those individuals were really hampered in their teaching. Several of these individuals were dismissed.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** And had their careers ruined. It's an interesting period, both full of growth and excitement, and also this much more difficult issue somewhat simultaneously having its influence.

**Mr. Bishop:** It was good for us as students to come in on the new leading edge with the change in philosophical approach. Actually, the committees, both at the federal level and at the state level, regarding un-American affairs began to diminish very quickly. It gave an opportunity for higher education to move along and for people who were seeking a profession in activities related to higher education and requiring higher education, I think, it became a lot more healthy.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** Good. So the impact was sharp while it was happening, but then dissipated?

**Mr. Bishop:** Yes.

**Ms. Kilgannon:** President Allen left the University after that for different reasons. He got a different position, and maybe that had some mitigating effects. You could have a change in administration; you could bring in new people and put that behind you.

**Mr. Bishop:** All throughout the structure in government in the United States there were a lot of persons who were changed as a result of their having developed approaches of support of these kinds of un-American charges. I think there were people in higher education, and no doubt policy members on the Board of Regents, who may have sympathized with that, who were no longer in leadership roles.